

JOSE W. FELL
RESEARCH, CLIPPINGS
PHOTOS ETC. COMPILED BY
M.L. HOUSER OF PEORIA, ILL.

DRAWER 106

CONTEMPORARIES

71.2009 075.03786



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Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

Jesse W. Fell
Research & Clippings

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

American Unitarian Association

25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

EVERETT MOORE BAKER

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

March 14, 1933

Mr. M. L. Houser
Box 55
Peoria, Illinois

My dear Mr. Houser:

Thank you very much for your complete listing of references to the subject of my inquiry.

If you are interested in any further information about either the Rev. Charles Gordon Ames or Jesse W. Fell, I should suggest that you communicate with the Rev. Robert D. Richardson, 141 High Street, Medford, Massachusetts. Mr. Richardson is the great grandson of Jesse Fell and, at the moment, is the owner of a three-page autobiographical manuscript by Mr. Lincoln, which he is presenting to the Library of Congress in Washington. We had this manuscript on exhibition here on Lincoln's Birthday. It is most interesting and I suppose a very valuable document.

According to Mr. Richardson, President Lincoln lived in the same house with Mr. Fell for some time when they were both about twenty-five years old and there began a friendship which continued over many years. After Mr. Fell became established in what appears in the pictures I have seen to be a large and pretentious home Mr. Lincoln was a frequent guest there and it was in the library of this home that Lincoln wrote the autobiographical sketch which Mr. Richardson now has.

Cordially,



EMB:B

March 19, 1938.

Rev. Robert D. Richardson,
141 High Street,
Medford, Mass.

Dear Mr. Richardson:-

Mr. Everett Moore Baker -- I do not know his proper title -- informs me that you are the great-grandson of Jesse W. Fell.

I should like to make a special study of Mr. Fell's life, my theory being that his influence on Lincoln's intellectual development has never received the recognition it deserves.

Each year, I am invited to speak to the Chicago Lincoln Group; and I should like my next subject to be

Jesse W. Fell, Lincoln's Friend and Mentor.

If you can give me all the sources of which you know, perhaps some information about your distinguished forebear that has not heretofore been told, I shall be very grateful.

Paul M. Angle, Ex-Sec. Illinois State Historical Library, or Dr. Harry E. Pratt, Ex-Sec. The Abraham Lincoln Association, Springfield, Ill. can tell you if I am trustworthy.

In a separate envelope, I am sending you a copy of my study of Lincoln's "Favorite Poem," which please accept with my compliments.

Very sincerely,

M.L.Houser.

COUNTY COURT

LOGAN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

LAWRENCE B. STRINGER, JUDGE

LINCOLN, ILLINOIS, March 26, 1938.

Mr. M.L. Houser.
Peoria.

Dear Friend:

Yours to hand this morning. I have not been very well for the past two years and have been put to my wit's end to keep up with my court work, which seems to be increasing in volume weekly. Am also a member of a commission appointed by the Governor to revise the election laws of this state and find myself still further involved in a campaign for re-election.

The statements made in my history with reference to the movement for a division of Sangamon county and the selection of Lincoln as a candidate for the Legislature with that purpose in view were gathered by me from statements made by old settlers at the various old settlers meetings which I attended in the old days. One of my informants, as I recall them, was one John S. Metcalf, whose father circulated a petition in this section for the division. His father was John Metcalf, who owned about 1000 acres of land in what is now Logan county, but which was then in Sangamon. Another informant was J.Q. Primm, who early lived in what is now Menard and later was a J.P. in the city of Lincoln. John S. Metcalf was one of the first postmasters in Lincoln. My information on this subject--therefore is largely traditionary but I am certain of the absolute truth of my information, for the pioneers who so informed me were definitely in a situation to know.

You may recall that Scripps biography states that Lincoln was "urgently besought by his friends at New Salem" to make his first race for the Legislature but did so reluctantly and "against his better judgment" and to satisfy his New Salem friends. In Lincoln's second race for Legislature in 1834, he did not mention county division nor did he in 1836. But in 1836, John Calhoun openly advocated division in his campaign. Lincoln said nothing but simply bided his time and when the opportunity came, he acted.

As to Mentor Graham--at the time his remains were brought from Dakota (S.D.), I collected considerable data about him. That was a number of years ago and I have made most diligent search for the data among my files but am unable to find them. Most of this data I secured from descendants of Graham who lived at Greenview. His granddaughter, Mrs. E.D. Ennis, was, at the time President of the State Legion Woman's Auxiliary. Her husband was an undertaker in Greenview and it was he who brought the remains of Mentor Graham from Blunt, S.D. and had them interred in a small burying ground just south of the site of New Salem. Mrs. Ennis' mother, as I recall, lived with Mrs. Ennis and I think still resides with her. The mother wrote me at one time, asking me if I would not write for her a biography of Mentor Graham but I was not able to comply from want of time. The mother was, of course, a daughter of Mentor Graham but I do not now recall her name.

As I think I told you a number of years ago, I had contemplated writing a Lincoln book but I have never, as yet, found time to do so. Just this morning, I received a letter from the representative of an eastern publishing concern asking me if I ~~was~~ had my MSS prepared for submission. I haven't any such MSS anywhere near preparation, and being now in my 72nd year, not overly well and overpowered with court and other work, the prospects of my preparing such MSS in my lifetime are dubious.

With best wishes,

Lawrence B. Stringer

Fell.

Article on
L.S. H.S. "Journal"
Oct. 1916

Judge Shreager
about Lincoln being
elected to cut up
Sauganum Co.

Fell.

"Lincoln Biographie"

Barton

J. S. N. Soc. #36 (1929)

"Transactions"

P. 61-63

Fell
J. S. N. S.

"Journal"
Apr. 1936 - V 29 - No 1.

P. 65

67-8

Burridge
i. - 539
vi. - 294 * 628

"Trans" McR. Co. His for,
III, 22

See Vol. 1 (atm), 338.

THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION

LOGAN HAY, PRESIDENT

ROBERT E. MILLER, TREASURER

PAUL M. ANGLE, SECRETARY

HARRY E. PRATT, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



PURPOSES:

"To observe each anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln; to preserve and make more readily accessible the landmarks associated with his life; and actively to encourage, promote and aid the collection and dissemination of authentic information regarding all phases of his life and career."

FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

March 28, 1938

Dear Dr. Houser:

I tried also to make some sense out of that conference in Bloomington and couldn't so passed it up in my story of Lincoln in Bloomington. I think the conference that was held if any, was at Judge Davis's at the time Lincoln spoke there Sept. 4th. There was plenty of time for it on the night of Sept. third. Of course that doesn't get the Freeport Debate into the picture but then there were five yet to come. I have a hunch the old boys got their dates slightly mixed. There was another hot one that I couldn't prove or disprove, that the night after the Lost Speech, Lincoln, Davis, Swett and another man went in a carriage to Tremont. That doesn't sound like sense but it is believed in Bloomington by some. The time right after Lost Speech for three days is blank. After an all day convention, those men would have gone off like that doesn't sound like Davis' usual good judgment. I have a number of Judge Reeves original letters but sad to say they are all in the 80s and 90s, with nary a mention of Lincoln.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Harry E. Pratt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "P" at the end.

Thank you for copy of "Abraham Lincoln's Favorite Histories."

AYER PUBLIC LIBRARY
DELAVER, ILLINOIS

March. 31 - 1938.

Mr M. R. Houser.
Peoria, Illinois.

County records
for Delaware.

Dear Mr Houser:-

Pardon some delay in answering
your letter of March 26th. because of time to interview
four relatives of Jesse W. Fell. not one of them have any
record of him living here, that time you mentioned, altho
he might, they did, because, his wife was a Brown from
here. I was told, that Jesse W. Fell day was celebrated
in Normal, town founded by him, over twenty years ago,
perhaps thirty, which may have been printed in Bloomington
Pantagraph. He was sole or part owner of the "Observer", which
later was merged with the Pantagraph, in 1868, when he took
into partnership, his son in law, W. O. Davis, later owner
til his death of latter paper. It was suggested to me that you
might get this information you want in the files of the Panta-
graph. All good wishes to Mrs Houser and yourself.

Sincerely, Edith M. Pittsford

Fell

Jas Barranger and

A. L. Asm. Bulletin #51 -

- 3 - '38 for remarks on

P. as V-Pres. indication

he was champion of

Great Northwest and

it relieved his stand

between South & East

enrolled it Co. con-

federation,

Lincoln Feb 11
Returned for Examination
of Capacity
Oldroyd - 394

Mr. M. L. Houser
Box 55
Peoria, Ill.



SEC. 562 P. L. & R.

THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION

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FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

April 8, 1938

Dear Dr. Houser:

Yordie has just read Howells tribute of 1880 and in her words here is what he meant to say: "No one speaking of Lincoln ever has to conceal a stain upon his good name because there was no stain. There was never any mean action or littleness in Lincoln's life. Even trifling incidents of kindness in his life have become magnified because of the purity of his reputation." With this reading of his words don't you think it might be called a tribute.

I don't believe the division of Sangamon County was the great issue either in 1832 or 1834. It might possibly have been in 1836 and most surely was in 1838. The Sangamo Journal is full of it all spring and summer of 1838 and that agitation brought three or four places in the limelight as possible county seats for the new county. I don't really believe there was any strong push however for a new county until Taylor took over the town of Petersburg and began pushing the county idea to develop the town site. This as I recall was 1836.

There are only three good places to get the dope on Jesse W. Fell. Typed copies of his letters in the Illinois Survey at Urbana, Francis Milton Morehouse, "The Life of Jesse W. Fell," Univ. of Ill. Studies in the Social Sciences, June 1916, 129 pp with index. The other place is an article in the Normal Univ. quarterly at the time of the Jesse W. Fell gateway dedication. I do not have a copy of it and from what I recall, it had nothing not found in the Morehouse article. You are welcome to borrow my copy of Morehouse if you do not happen to have one. Lincoln wrote Fell an interesting letter in 1838 that is not in any of the volumes of his letters. It throws some light on Stuart's candidacy for Congress in 1838.

Sincerely,

Harry

— Abraham Lincoln Association, Springfield, Ill.

--Dear Dr. Houser:

I am sending the Fell and also an addresson Lincoln that has in it some of the dope you might be interested in. Send it back when you get through with the Fell. Called Booker at McDonald's and he does not have the Morehouse either. Have you the article in Journal *OK*, Ill. Hist. Soc. Vol. 9, No.3, Oct. '16 on Fell Memorial Gateway at Normal and article by Morehouse in Transactions, Vol. XXI, 1915, p. 71 ff.?

Sincerely,

Harry

for ↑



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Dr. M.L. Houser

Peoria, Ill.

Box # 55

Notes

See

T. Bates

Lincoln in Fed. Office

Please return when convenient.
H.

ESTABLISHED 1846

The Daily Pantagraph

BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

LORING C. MERWIN
PRESIDENT

July
One,
1938.

Mr. M. L. Houser,
Box 55,
Peoria, Illinois.

Dear Mr. Houser:

I hope you will pardon my delay in acknowledging your letter of June 22. I have just returned to the office after ten days in the east.

Thank you very much for sending me your booklet "The Education of Abraham Lincoln", which I have read with a great deal of interest.

I am sorry that I do not have, nor do I know for certain where to obtain, a list of the books in the library of Jesse Fell. I believe, however, that there are two people who could give you this information if anyone can. These are Mrs. Emmett L. Richardson, 2734 East Bradford Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Professor Frances Milton Morehouse, Hunter College, New York City. The former is a granddaughter of Mr. Fell, who is more intimately acquainted with his personal belongings than any other member of the family, and the latter is the author of the biography of Jesse W. Fell.

I suggest that you write Mrs. Richardson first, and if she can not supply the information that you want, then apply to Professor Morehouse. If you do not find what you want, let me know and I will make further inquiries here.

I hope that when you are in Bloomington you will drop in here as I would very much enjoy making your acquaintance.

Sincerely yours,



Loring C. Merwin.

July 7, 1938.

Mrs. Emmett L. Richardson,
2734 East Bradford Avenue,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

My dear Mrs. Richardson:-

As a student of Abraham Lincoln's intellectual development, I believe that your grandfather, Jesse W. Fell, had more influence in Lincoln's education than is generally supposed.

In attempting to develop that thesis, I should be helped greatly if I had a list of Mr. Fell's books; and I have wondered if a list of the books in his library is extant.

Mr. Loring C. Merwin tells me that you are more intimately acquainted with Mr. Fell's personal belongings than any one else, and you might possibly be able to advise me about the books that he read and left.

You may be sure that any help you may give me will be thankfully received.

Perhaps the reprint of a "Hobbies" article which I enclose herewith may be of some interest to you.

Very respectfully,

M. L. Houser.

August 11, 1938.

Dear Dr. Pratt:-

It appears, therefore, that my grandfather, Solomon Howser, was not only wise, as indicated by his name, but that he wouldn't steal a brindle steer when Bowling Green was looking. That's an interesting item for my prospective "The Howsers and Housers at New Salem"---for family consumption only. Thank you again.

Mrs. Griffith was here yesterday in the interest of "Illinois Quest." She is shrewd enough to use your indorsement to a fare-you-well, and she says that it is 100 percent potent.

Subscribed, and got the four first numbers. Read them through, and enjoyed them tremendously. The history of the various counties written in that romantic, sketchy style will be fascinating to a large number of people. Many readers should graduate into the State Historical Society.

In regard to the Fell matter. Hand you letter from Mr. Merwin and copy of a letter to Mrs. Richardson. The latter did not reply. I also wrote to the writer of the Fell paper at Bloomington meeting -- sorry I couldn't be there -- and he did not reply either.

It is, of course, a nuisance for such people to get letters from people they never heard of -- and don't care to hear of -- so one can't blame them.

I'm wondering, therefore, if you might ask Prof. Morehouse if he knows anything about what books Fell had after 1842. (time of bankruptcy proceedings)

If this is something of a nuisance for you, please remember I shall be glad to reciprocate if ever possible.

Have found several things that lead me to believe that the purpose of bringing Lincoln out for membership in the General Assembly as early as 1832 was a desire to divide Sangamon County, that while little was said about it for obvious reasons, a general wish for such division partly explains the heavy vote he got around New Salem.

Sincerely,

M. L. .

BOOKS OWNED BY JESSE W. FELL
AND LISTED IN BANKRUPTCY IN 1842....

BANKRUPTCY VOL. 1, P. 693.
in office of clerk of Federal Court
Springfield, Ill.

Catalog of Law Books.

Chettys Blackstone in 2 Vols.	Wammons Misc Prins in 1 Vol.
Coke upon Littleton in 3 Vols.	Whites Digest in 3 Vols.
Strong's Pleadings in 1 Vol.	Holts Reports in 1 Vol.
Hist. of English Laws in 1 Vol.	Modern Reports in 4 Vol.
Chetty's Pleadings in 3 Vols.	Cases in Chancery in 2 Vols.
Jones Bailment in 1 Vol.	Chipman on Contracts in 1 Vol.
Fell on Gaurantees in 1 Vol.	Statutes of Ohio in 1 Vol.

Misc. Works.

✓ Shakespeare Works in 2 Vols.	Faber on Infidelity
Spectator in 1 Vol.	The Mothers Book
Aids to replection in 1 Vol.	American Gardiner
✓ Statesmans Manuel in 1 Vol.	Senate Debate
Conversations on Chemistry in 1 Vol.	Florist Guide
Wilberforces Practical Views	School Atlas
Pindars Works	Two Shares in Bloomington Library
✓ Websters Dictionary	One Porte Folio
✓ Paleys Philosophy	Paten Ruler & Inkstand
✓ Night Thoughts	Letter Press
Oriental Annual	File of National Intelligencer
Turners Annual in 2 Vols.	File of U. S. Gazette
The Gifts of 36 & 37 in 2 Vols.	File of Nites Register
Young Ladys Own Book	File of Bloomington Observer.
Atlantic Souvenir	
Young Ladys Books	
British Latinists	
Summers Botany	
Wonder of Switzerland	
✓ Constitutions Guide	
✓ The Gazeteer of Illinois	
The Olive Branch	
The British Spy	
The Muse	
Domestic Duties	
Young Botanist	
Testament	
✓ Holy Bible	
Domestic Cookery	

Oct. 25, 1938.

Dear Dr. Pratt:-

As you have been informed, no doubt, "Hobbies" is asking for the title of article~~x~~ for the February number. I'm caught with my suspenders unfastened. Am trying to get dope on George H. Derby and his book, "Phoenixiana," but am not sure enough about getting it to risk announcing that title.

Believe I shall take "Jesse W. Fell: Lincoln's Friend, Mentor, and Sponsor" for my subject, and see what I can do with it in a short article.

If I do, I'll have to get most of my dope from you--the Morehouse book and anything else you have on the subject except ISHS "Journal for Oct. 1916.

Maybe, if you will help me, I can get up something that will be of interest to some who are not already better posted on the subject than I'll probably ever be. Anyway, it will give me a good excuse to work the subject out for myself as best I can.

Please help the blind.

Sincerely,

M.L.

Dear Dr. Houser:

I shall be only too glad to do anything I can to help you on the Jesse W. Fell. I think you would enjoy looking over the Jesse W. Fell mss. (typed copies) in the Ill. Historical Survey on the top floor of the Lincoln Hall at U. of I. There is a lot of very interesting material that Miss Morehouse was unable to use in her short account. I have the three vols. of the Mc Lean Co. Hist. Soc. and Duis and another early Mc Lean Co. history that you are welcome to use. There is a letter of Fell to Lincoln and Lincoln to Fell in 1838. The L. letter is not to be found in his pub. works anyplace. Deals with Stuart's campaign for Congress. You could weave that in. Wakefield's book has a little on Fell. A picture of the Fell home as it is today would be of interest. Let me know how I can help and I will.

Sincerely, Harry.

Franklin J. Meine, 1422 N. La Salle
Chicago, can help on the Derby



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS



Dr. M.L. Houser
Peoria, Illinois

wards in the Legislature at the same time that
Lincoln was also a member.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours

Harry Wood

Purebred
Holstein Friesians

T. B. Accredited.
Negative to Bang's Test.

WOODDELL FARM

HARRY M. WOOD, PROPRIETOR

DELAVAN, ILLINOIS

2 / 12 / 39

Dear M.L:

Many thanks for the "Fell" articles, I will send one to the granddaughter and see what I get from it. I have just recently written to her requesting her to read the "American Years", and give me her reaction on the book, and when she does so I will try to remember you in her report.

Should you be anticipating a trip to Milwaukee, and would like to have a letter of introduction to her, I will be glad to write you one: I will see what can be done about his library - I recall having seen them on many occasions, also seeing Uncle Jesse reading in his study. His oral reading would charm anyone, and we youngsters were always wanting him to read for us.

You may recall that in the "American years" does not do the man justice in the words he is supposed to use.

In your article you speak of his stopping at the home of William Brown in Dillon, this home was a double log house with a loft, and was situated near the Mackinaw, just ~~off~~ northeast of the old town of "Tullamore", which you no doubt will remember. This Brown, my great grandfather, was after

RALPH G. LINDSTROM
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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



Office of the Secretary-Treasurer
818 TRANSAMERICA BUILDING
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

April, 11, 1939

Hon. M. L. Houser
Box 55
Peoria, Illinois

Dear Mr. Houser:

I acknowledge, with sincere thanks, the items which you recently sent to me, and which have found a welcome place among my Lincolniana.

Do you know, or have you ever corresponded with Mrs. Annie Durant of Los Angeles, who is a daughter of Kersey Fell, a brother of Jessie W. Fell? I have had two or three conferences with her, and find her most interesting.

If, at any time, I may reciprocate some of your courtesies and favors, kindly let me know.

Wishing you every success, I am

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "F. Ray Risdon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "F" and a long, sweeping underline.

FRR:PAH

May 9th 1934

My dear Mr. Stanciers.

Your package of pamphlets has just arrived, and I hasten to thank you for them and to say I shall enjoy reading every one of them if my eyes do not give out before getting through all the time. Beautiful Lincoln Liberator - I am receiving, through the great kindness of Judge W. Ballinger's solicitors in my behalf of information. I will soon turn a-on refer you to a page in the McLean Co. report - on

My Father. I really would love to have
some one with a true account of ~~what~~ what he
really was - and I am going to send you a
photo of him. I am having copied, as soon as
I get them. I am getting very tired now. having
just read the Springfield people for a
large shipment of books. rec'd yesterday
you will receive their brief note - this
time. I must surely thank you for the
note you are showing me. and I fully
appreciate it. very cordially yours
Annie Full Devault -

7701 Santa Monica Blvd
Los Angeles Calif. May 10th 1939

My dear Mr. Hansen.

I have been looking through the delightful and most instructing things you sent me, and I feel most honored to receive these, and the kind letters from all of your wonderful men.

I wish my dear Father could know of your attention to his little girl. And I also wish you all could have known him.

He was such an unselfish, modest and remarkable man - with so little strength and health.

He was always saying "oh, Jesse can do that so much better than ^I give it to him. Jesse's voice is so much better and stronger than mine. He can be heard, and he loves to talk. Jesse can be relied upon". He loved and honored his brother, as I have seldom known.

My Father was always having to break engagements because of his weak stomach, which always troubled him. His throat also, and the number of times he received pneumonia.

accidents: inconvenienced him.

He went to Europe in '59 with his German
Dr. Elliger I think, to gain strength and
during the trip he forgot him to smoking
in hopes that might help his throat, but
it never did. He disliked it always. He used
to call me in to light his cigars - for him.
also he called me in when he was about to
take a little whiskey. he just going into the
garden and gather a little tansey to
whip up the water and whiskey till it was
quite better. also when an old lady came
to Bloomington with an electric battery he had
her treat me, and himself - you see I was
so like him in my frail body. he seemed
to look after me more than he did the other
more rugged children, who were more like
^{ours} than mother. I was called "fussy"

But I guess I have stated enough - to now give
you the name and page in the book. I want
you to read. I believe you will find it in
Florida. In "The Good old Times in McLean
County, Illinois." 1874 - Pub - by The
Leader Publishing and Printing House ^{and}
If you don't - I will mail one to you to read.
You will. I know pardon me for writing all
this about my dear Father. even if you don't
write the article. You see there is always so
much written of dear Uncle Jesse. and - Jersey
so little. Very sincerely yours - Anne Felt Devault

7701 Santa Monica Blvd
Los Angeles Calif -

Wittouwer.

I don't feel the need to write
any more today. So am sending this
copy of my Father. You will understand.

Sincerely R. F. Durant -

May 11" 39

May 22, 1939.

My dear Mrs. Durant:-

It was good of you to send me a photograph of your father and such a good human-interest story about him.

When I can get to it, I want to follow the matter up by going to Bloomington -- only an hour's ride -- and by talking with Dr. Harry Pratt, who is thoroughly acquainted with Bloomington history. Can have no idea at this time when I will find the time; but, in the meanwhile, shall be picking up data.

Just now, I am trying to make three different studies in my spare time, and am progressing very slowly. Hope to be able to run down to New Harmony and some other Indiana points soon in a checkup on Lincoln's religious environments.

As soon as schools let up out may get some help from a young lady who has occasionally worked for me during the last four or five years. She graduates from college soon. Then, too, have found a girl at Washington, D. C. who can look up data there on the subjects I am studying at this time.

It is splendid, of course, for you to feel so vivid an interest in things historical; but I note that you speak in each letter of being tired; so I'm going to suggest -- as I used to do to my father -- that you make care of your strength and health your first consideration, thereby maintaining your ability to enjoy history, people and life.

Yesterday I got a request to send a pamphlet to a man in Philadelphia who paid \$12,000 for Lincoln's letter to General Hooker when giving Hooker command of the Army of the Potomac. A man who does that must either have a tremendous interest or lots of money.

But I mustn't tire you out with my chatting.

Thank you again, and believe me,

Cordially yours,

Mrs. Annie Fell Durant,
Los Angeles.

M. L. Houser

7701 Santa Monica Blvd
Los Angeles June 16 "33

My dear Mr. Hooper.

Your kind letter of the 10th with
picture of yourself included recd. and very much
enjoyed. Thank you very much for all you
do for me - in connection with the Lincoln plan
I have - I will be very glad to know more
of the Lincoln Memorial structure: and see the
booklet from them.

Also I am glad the Peppercorn College has written
you, and you have recd their circulars. I hope
I have made a wise choice, in deciding on them -
I am to have a visit from them again soon - and
inquire more about what they will do with my
contribution of books &c.

In cleaning up the books from my Father's
old mahogany writing desk and book shelves, yesterday
I came across a very beautiful copy of "The Poems
of Krishna" by Richard Carlyle. 1st Edition
got out by the Phoenix Press, L.A. 1933, with
a fine little note by Mauley Hall - owner of the
Press - and publisher of his own books and took it to
help me eat my breakfast this A.M.

This was an old desk where my Father opened
his Law Office in Bloomington after he began to
read Law - at the instance of Lincoln. That he -
my Father had much better education than he had -
and he L. felt - assured he would master Law &
Lincoln used the office always when in town. as
this room that it.

business was carried on. in joining the Unitarian Church.

Lincoln in attendance. I used to have a little bit of telling of this. and Lincoln saying - in the meetings that, if ever he joined a Church it would be one of the same teaching. Some one - looking through my box of clippings must have carried it off -

I am wondering if you travel about with a Kodak as you inventyaki for your "Articles" - and - if so. would you be interested in turning up our old home 709 E. Grove St. and getting a snap of it for me? Dr. The last used to be the only home I remember in D. The lot used to be 3/4 of a block. The house began when I was only 2 or 3 years old - a blk 1/2 high - Every one said when I was 7 years old - a new baby - Mr. Fall built on a room - I then have 17 rooms in it when I left it in 1882 - after my marriage to George Frederick Durant. going to St. Louis to live, where he was ^{not} managing of the Bell Tel. Co. He had just in the very 1st Yr. and. died in 1909. still Emil Menger. His Father. Charles Durant. was a very interesting Naturalist - some time I may tell you of him. if you are interested. He was the 1st Am. Birvornian. Now - I am told our house is a 3 family house - with 6 or 7 other houses on the lot -

You are the 1st of my new Lincoln friends to send a picture of yourself - I hope the other will do so soon. I am very interested in seeing if they are "Things of beauty". I'm sure I shall think so - even if they are as homely as Lincoln was thought to be - To me he is beautiful!! and I believe you will be a joy for ever to me - you & all of Judge Ballinger's friends who are making themselves so kindly & helpful to me -

Again. Thanking you sincerely.

your grateful friend

Amie Fall Durant -

Don't ever let me take too much

from you.



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS



Mr M. L. Harker
Box 55
Peoria
Ill.



DE SOTO-PLYMOUTH MOTOR CARS
DAVENPORT, IOWA

July 15, 1939

Dear Houser:

At the request of Mrs. Annie Fell Durant, of Los Angeles, I am enclosing a copy of the picture made of her, the lady standing in the garden, and of her Quaker grandmother, the mother of her father and of Jessie Fell. Don't you think she was trustful in loaning me the negatives to have these prints made?

The stock in Lincoln Memorial University should go up, way up, since the Honorable Herbert Hoover delivered the address this year. If next year they would have Franklin Delano Roosevelt do the same thing, I am sure the university would be so high that even the new two-hundred-inch telescope would not be able to trace it.

The weather here is too rotten for both republicans and democrats. Get down on your prayer bones and ask for something better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "H.J. Lytle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

H.J. Lytle
MB

M. L. Houser
Box 55
Peoria, Illinois



Mrs. Annie Fell Durant



Mother of Jesse Fell

My Father

Kersey H. Fell

born in Penn May 1st 1815

died in Bloomington Ill. May 1st 1892

Uncle Fell Durant

The original was made in the
time of his Riding the Circuit with
Lincoln, I think, and I have just
had three new copies made and am
sending at once to your kind and
helpful men, who at Judge Bollinger's
suggestion are passing you one to me
A. F. D.



Kersey Fell

Dec. 16, 1929.

Miss Erlene Muder,
Palmyra, Mo.

Dear Miss Muder:-

Seems to me you are making a good start in your research, and I am much pleased with your report.

Believe you are right in thinking that S. M. Todd owned a farm ten or twelve years before the one he bought in 1838. My impression is he bought one four miles north of Palmyra about 1856.

That cannon item is what you girls call "precious."

Please find out, if you can, if there are extant files of a local newspaper besides the "Spectator," for the Civil War period. Hope you can find in one or the other a reference to Todd's going to Washington to secure the release of Dr. Kay.

Please take whatever time is necessary to make a good search, and then send to me with your bill.

I shall be glad to hear at any time how you are getting along.

Sincerely,

M. L. L.

Palmyra, Mo.
December 14, 1939

Dr. M. L. Houser
Box 55
Peoria, Ill.

Dear Sir:

I have received your literature which I find interesting and instructive. Thank you for your kindness.

Up to the present time my research has borne little fruit. A number of the oldest citizens with whom I have talked recall Samuel Blair Todd's name, but merely that.

The records in the recorder's office bear his name but twice and the only reference to his purchasing property was on May 19, 1868, when he purchased a piece of land from William H. Lee and wife in Pound Grove township of this county at the price of \$4800. This does not tally with the description which you gave me, as it is located about 10 miles north of Palmyra. I feel sure that there must have been an earlier purchase, but the clerk at the office told me that many land transactions were not recorded in the early days.

A family related to my mother, by the name of "Lemmons" lived in Fabius community in the early days. The last survivor of the immediate family died two years ago. I remember hearing him speak of Blair Todd. Perhaps the record of their property might tell us something.

My most interesting find, to date, was in the Marion County history. It is compiled in such a way, and contains so many stories of events that it was necessary to scan several hundred pages. Here I found that a cannon, belonging to the local Confederate troops was hidden in a haystack at the "Blair Todd farm a few miles north of Palmyra", at the beginning of the war.

Due to the Christmas rush at our office, I have been unable to give as much time to this work as I would like, but I expect to have the available information within a short time.

I am making copies of the references that I find and I shall send them to you in the near future.

Although I am unable to tell you a great deal, I thought you would like to know that I am working.

In the history references are made to a Liberal Republican Congressman, J. G. Blair. I am wondering if these would be of value.

Very truly yours,

Elsene Muder

Mich 8th 40

Dear Mr Hansen

If this A. M.'s mail does not bring
me a reply of my question "will the
address of Box 55 be O. K. for me
to send a pack age to you by P.R.
express?" I shall just only the article
I have - or can direct you to find
in the B. Historical Society.
I expected to send a few things
of interest regarding Lincoln as well
as family records -

See - Genealogy and work in the
Fall - in Eastern Penn. done by
Sarah Fell of Wilmington Del. 1891 -

See page 123 -

in McLean Co. history for K. H. Fell
see page 514 - Vol. 1899 -

In good old times of McLean Co. 1874
read from pg 330 - 336 - particularly
pg 335 -

Joseph Fell, youngest son of John &
Margaret Fell - born in 1668 Oct. 19
Father died when I was about 2 years
old, was apprenticed to John Bond

2

a house carpenter & joiner, followed
this trade while I lived in England,
When 30. married Bridget Wilson
we had 2 sons, Joseph & Benjamin
after that sailed to this country (Am)
landed in Virginia. lived there a year
in Township Wakefield. Then we had
a daughter Jamar. when she was
about 7 months old we came to Buxing-
ham. Now we now dwell. about
2 years later we had another daughter
named Mary, when she was 11 days
old the mother died. In 3 years I
married Elizabeth Doyle, born in this
country, her Father was Irish. her
mother born in Rhode Island, I have
had 4 children by 1st wife. & 7 by
my 2nd marriage. This is written 6th day
12 mo - 1744 - signed Joseph Fall -

2nd generation.

Joseph - 2nd - Joseph 1st - married to Mary
Kinsay

Benjamin. 2nd - Joseph. married
Hannah Scarborough - in Bucks Co -
they had 6 children - 2nd marriage to

Hannah Inedell. they 4 children
3rd married to Sarah Rawlings. they had 4 children

our family came for 2nd marriage -
Thomas - married to Grace Parry -

our Father, Jesse Fell - married
Rebecca Roman - Uncle Jesse ^{5-11 5' 11"} & Henry
+ a lot of others - near the ~~the~~ generation -

I came of the 6th Annell Dumont -

of the 8 children - the oldest - J. P. Fell
94 last - Oct 1st. youngest - Burr - 78
+ J. A. F. D. - 89 21st of last Nov. are
all that are alive now but 8' 40th

I'm getting to tired to write more -

My Father broke 2 ribs + lived with
the excruciating pain - + still carried on!
He was never robust - as the other boys
were. I hope you can read +
this may be of a little help.

I was intending to send my Mother
story too - but will let it go at that
I'm making an honor may give fiction
8 each. to B. H. Society if I succeed in
making them interesting -

Full

McLean County
His. Soc.

"Graessbachan"

pp. 21-24

Get

Look up in

Gustav Werner

"Memoirs of G. K."
~~unpublished~~

JESSE W. FELL: ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S FRIEND, MENTOR, AND SPONSOR

By M. L. Houser

Born in 1808 of Quaker parents in Chester County, Pennsylvania, Jesse W. Fell, early in life, developed a passion for learning and a love of nature. His people were poor; but with such help as they could give him, supplemented by his own efforts, he secured a good education. He then resolved to seek his fortune in the West. By teaching school, selling books, and doing such other work as was available, he accumulated funds for the western journey.

Pausing at Stubenville, Ohio, he entered the office of a firm of attorneys; and for the next two years diligently studied the science of law, passing his bar examination in the fall of 1832.

Two weeks later, he started west again; his purpose this time being to find a good location at which to practice his profession. He trudged on foot through Ohio and Indiana; and by November, had reached Eastern Illinois. There he was told that a new town called Bloomington, in Mc Lean County, was the center of a rich territory, and that it gave promise of an unusually rapid developement.

John T. Stuart, at Springfield, confirmed all the young man had heard about the prospects of Mc Lean County, and he advised Fell to become Bloomington's first attorney.

Continuing on his way, Fell stopped at the little town of Dillon to visit at the home of William Brown, some members of whose family he had known in Pennsylvania.

Conditions at Bloomington seemed favorable, and Fell decided to settle there; but, being now out of money, he returned to Dillon and spent the

winter as the Brown children's tutor. Several years later, he married one of the girls in this household.

When Fell opened his law office in Bloomington, in the spring of 1833, Central Illinois was in the midst of a land boom. That brought him an abundance of business; and the care with which he examined land titles, and handled cases in court, made clients recommend him to their friends. Becoming known as a good judge of land values, he was called on to locate an immense number of farms for eastern investors and land speculators.

He began buying and selling real estate on his own account, and was soon making such profits as are possible only ~~when on a continually rising~~ on a continually rising market. Finding real estate operations more profitable and enjoyable than legal practice, he sold his law business to David Davis, a young lawyer who had recently arrived in Illinois from Maryland.

By 1837, Fell had accumulated sixty thousand dollars worth of property; but all of it was swept away in the panic of that year. When times improved, he resumed his realty operations. These covered Central Illinois, and extended as far away as Chicago, Iowa, and Wisconsin. He soon had a good income again, with sufficient income to indulge in some private charities and many public donations.

At the beautiful home he eventually established at Fell Park, on the north edge of Bloomington, he often entertained such notables as Owen Lovejoy, John H. Bryant, Abraham Lincoln, David Davis, and Leonard Swett; and the native and foreign trees and shrubbery with which he surrounded the house soon made his home, as it remains to this day, one of the principal show places in that part of the country.

Early in 1837, Fell and James Allin founded Bloomington's first newspaper the Observer and Mc Lean County Advocate, shipping the presses and type from Philadelphia by way of New Orleans. It was well edited and well printed for a frontier paper, but the panic of that year forced its suspension. Some

years later, Fell bought the Pantagraph. It has remained until this day the leading newspaper of its section, and it is now owned and operated by some of his descendants.

His interest in education never flagged. He was a member of the first incorporated board of trustees of Illinois Wesleyan University, serving until 1837. He dreamed of making North Bloomington, now Normal, an education center thereby attracting to it the kind of people with whom he loved to associate; so when the General Assembly of Illinois passed a bill for the immediate establishment of a State Normal School for the education of teachers, but did not designate its location, Fell determined to secure it for his dream city. The energy and skill with which he handled subscriptions, committees, and rival contestants, had their reward; and this first State-owned school ever established in Illinois remains to this day a monument to his foresight, industry, tact, and enthusiasm.

Planting trees became almost an obsession with Fell. Charmed by the appearance of West Philadelphia, which he visited on one of his many eastern trips, he resolved to make Normal its counterpart. He eventually planted thirty-five thousand trees in the town, and nearly two thousand on the campus of the State Normal School. On a big real estate project in Iowa, he set out over two hundred thousand trees and cuttings. A friend of his once said that any lack of trees in heaven would certainly be remedied soon after Fell arrived at the celestial city.

* * * * *

When he was a young man, Hon. Lawrence B. Stringer, of Lincoln, Illinois, attended many old settlers' meetings to interview pioneers regarding the early history of the State. A number of them told him that the principal purpose in electing Abraham Lincoln to the General Assembly from New Salem was to secure a division of Sangamon County and the establishment of what is now Menard County. In his History of Logan County,

Judge Stringer says:

Was it by accident or design, that the man who had been made a candidate for the Legislature, by the friends of county division in 1832, was the Chairman of the Committee on Counties * * * in the year 1839? * * * Mr. Lincoln, from this committee, promptly reported a bill "to establish the counties of Menard, Logan, and Dane," with a recommendation that it pass.

In her Life of Jesse W. Fell, Francis Milton Morehouse tells us:

In 1834 an effort was made to take from Mc Lean County its territory west of the third principal meridian, and add it to Tazewell County. * * * Mr. Fell opposed the movement valiantly from the first. Fearing that its friends might push the matter through the legislature if that body were left unguarded, he spent most of the winter of 1834-35 in Vandalia, where his efforts and influence were such that the project failed of realization. Mc Lean County owes to him, consequently, and to those who worked with him, the distinction of being the largest county in the State. * * * John T. Stuart of Springfield and Abraham Lincoln of New Salem were both at that time members of the legislature from Sangamon County. The two men roomed together, and Jesse Fell lived in the same house. * * * Stuart introduced Fell to Lincoln, and the two became almost at once great friends.

We have a right to suppose, perhaps, that it was also by "design" and not by "accident" that Fell secured lodging and board where he would be in close contact with John T. Stuart, then the leader of their party in the State, and also with Stuart's understudy and heir-apparent, especially as it was probably an open secret that Lincoln was particularly interested in county division.

There was much to insure a close and lasting friendship between Fell and Lincoln. Fell's ancestors were Pennsylvania Quakers; Lincoln believed that his were. Both had been surveyors, both were followers of Henry Clay, and both thoroughly disliked slavery or any other form of social injustice. Fell had received a good formal education, and he liked to impart information; Lincoln's education at that time was fragmentary, disorganized, and unsymmetrical, and his most valued friends were those who could help him to fill in the gaps. Each had qualities which the other lacked, neither objected to receiving assistance, and both were willing to return favors

with interest.

Political meetings and his work on the circuit often took Lincoln to Bloomington; Fell's interest in legislation, and his political activities as Chairman of the State Central Committee of his party, made him a frequent visitor at Springfield; so they had many opportunities to continue their association. Dr. Harry E. Pratt, of the Abraham Lincoln Association, Springfield, Illinois, has called our attention to some, as yet, unpublished letters which passed between Fell and Lincoln ~~that~~^{which} clearly indicate how close together they were working in political matters in 1838. Dr. Pratt believes, too, that in Kersey H. Fell, Jesse's brother, whose law office both used when in Bloomington, Lincoln and Jesse Fell found a willing and able counsellor in matters both legal and political. Through the years, their joint discussions, and Lincoln's studies, must have covered a wide range of subjects. A partial list of the books in Jesse Fell's library in 1841 includes a number which Lincoln is known to have read.

While Lincoln was essentially religious by nature, there is little doubt, we believe, that he did not accept either the harsh theology that was current in his day, or the aggressive atheism of many contemporary non-religionists; just as he refused to indorse either the theories of extreme slavery proponents, or those of radical Abolitionists. Jesse Fell seems to have been one of the few friends with whom Lincoln would discuss his religious convictions and doubts; and it was Fell who called Lincoln's ~~attention~~^{attention} to the liberal opinions of Dr. William E. Channing. Fell presented Lincoln with a six-volume set of Channing's works; and after Lincoln's death, some of his closest friends believed that Mr. Lincoln had found in the sermons and writings of Channing and Theodore Parker a religious philosophy which both satisfied his reason and comforted his spirit.

It was Fell who first proposed a joint debate between Lincoln and Douglas. The consummation of this project, some time later, brought Lincoln

to the favorable notice of the whole country, and made him, within a few weeks, and for the first time, a figure of national importance.

In 1859, Fell saw that if Pennsylvania could be induced to support his protege, Lincoln's nomination for President on the Republican ticket might be a possibility. He secured from Lincoln a short autobiography which he sent to Joseph J. Lewis, a republican politician of Pennsylvania who wrote persuasively. Lewis expanded the sketch into a two-column article which was skillfully phrased to give Lincoln the confidence, sympathy, and good will of any reader. It was first printed on February 11, 1860 in the Chester County Times. Copies of that edition were sent to many papers in Pennsylvania, and to leading newspapers all over the country. This article was immediately copied by the Pantagraph,^{whose editor was John J. Lewis' brother;} and ^{it} was reproduced in substance by the New York Tribune and the Chicago Press and Tribune, in their issues which announced the nomination of Lincoln. Widely copied by the press of the whole country, it gave Lincoln a favorable start in his campaign; and it was also used as the basis of his first three campaign biographies.

It would seem, therefore, that Fell, more than anyone else, not only planted and nurtured the political crop which David Davis and others harvested at the National Republican Convention in 1860, but that he had so arranged conditions that Lincoln could immediately be off to a good start in his race with Breckenridge, Douglas, and Bell.

* * * * *

Unlike most prophets, Jesse W. Fell has not lacked appreciation, nor has he been denied much honor, in his own community; but there are those who believe that historians in general, and Lincoln biographers in particular, have seldom realized how potent a factor Fell really was in Lincoln's Intellectual, spiritual, and political evolution.



